



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

Contact: T. Wayne Kirwan, 410-313-2108
wkirwan@howardcountymd.gov

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Former Head of Animal Welfare Society of Howard County Guilty of Felony Theft

Robin Deltuva, the former head of the nonprofit, Animal Welfare Society of Howard County has pleaded guilty to stealing the organization's funds. Deltuva, 44, of the 9300 block of Old Court Road, Windsor Mill, entered a guilty plea to a felony theft charge in Howard County Circuit Court this morning.

Deltuva served as president and treasurer of the organization from 2009 to January 2015 when she was terminated. In 2010, a judge dismissed similar charges against Deltuva because the organization's nonprofit status had lapsed. The reorganization was reconstituted with a board of directors, and established business practices, and Deltuva remained the head of the organization. The Animal Welfare Society is located adjacent to the county's own animal shelter in Columbia.

In this morning's hearing, Senior Assistant State's Attorney Tricia Cecil told the court that in February 2015 a board member discovered unexplained charges on the society's bank debit cards. The group's treasurer and another board member began reviewing three bank accounts and noted payments on a pink golf cart, payments for heating, air conditioning and refrigeration work on Deltuva's house, purchases of Apple iPads and iPods, hotel stays, airline tickets and personal legal expenses. Cecil told Judge Richard S. Bernhardt that unauthorized debit card purchases totaled over \$38,584. Police began an investigation in July 2015 and a county grand jury indicted Deltuva on September 6, 2017.

Judge Bernhardt set an August 3 sentencing date. Cecil stated that she will ask for a flat sentence of 18 months in jail and a civil judgment of restitution.

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